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FREEDOM DAY MESSAGE

George Padmore, Chairman, Pan African Federation, London.

It affords me great pleasure to send fraternal greetings to all representatives, friends and adherents of the Asian Socialist Conference on the occasion of the first celebration of Dependent Peoples' Freedom Day.

The Asian Socialist Conference is to be congratulated on initiating Freedom Day, which should serve not only to draw closer together those peoples of Asia and Africa who are still living under the yoke of imperialism and foreign domination, but also as a bridge between the nations of Asia which have recently emerged from alien domination and the dependent peoples still striving to achieve their political freedom.

A further significance of Freedom Day is that it demonstrates that those who have won their independence have not forgotten those who are still struggling for theirs. This is a greater mark of true international comradeship than all the pious resolutions passed by European so-called socialist parties when they are out of power but who follow decidedly imperialist policies when in office.

The history of the post-war years has most shown very clearly, if such evidence were needed, that the peoples of Asia and Africa are determined to free themselves of foreign rule, and not all the forces of oppression and reaction can stem their onward march to independence. In many parts of the dependent world the issue is already joined, and it is for true socialists and genuine anti-imperialists to give every support, both moral and practical, to sustain them in their struggle.

But national freedom must not be an end in itself. The new freedoms which are being achieved in this twentieth century can be consolidated and guaranteed only by forging international links for their common maintenance and protection. Nationalism must broaden out into internationalism, on the basis of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, with emphasis upon the dignity of the human personality.

Centuries of Western domination of Asia and Africa have left behind a legacy of ignorance, misery and poverty. But even worse than that is the attitude of subservience which they have created among the dependent peoples and of racial arrogance on the side of the oppressors. Both these antithetic attitudes must be rooted out. The attitude of racial superiority has seeped into the very heart of European man, with the result that even those who pay lip service to the cause of independence for subject peoples cannot free themselves from the idea that guidance and direction can come from the West alone.

We must reject this attitude tooth and nail, and while welcoming and accepting any material and technical aid which the West may offer, on our own terms, we must at the same time make it clear that Asians and Africans are capable of creating their own ways of life which guarantee the material welfare of the common people while providing us with a humanistic outlook and ensuring the brotherhood and unity of our peoples.

We hear so much today about partnership between the West and the dependent and lately independent peoples, but these pronouncements are not accompanied by any mark of equality. The partnership, as we see it, appears to be that between rider and the horse.

The peoples-----

The peoples of Asia and Africa are still to be the junior partners to be dictated to and directed by those of the West, who have assigned the respective roles. This is nothing but an inverted form of racial domination functioning under the guise of tentative friendship.

If the newly emerged and the emerging nations of Asia and Africa do not recognise and face up to this new form of racial domination, then they will very soon find themselves as truly bound by the West economically as they have been politically.

The majority of Europeans no matter what their political beliefs may be, are somehow quite incapable of accepting the ability of the Asiatic and African peoples to evolve a philosophy of their own, adapted to their own particular needs and conditions, and of directing their own activities.

Harsh though it may be to say this, yet said it must be, openly and forthrightly. For time is short, and unless we recognise the issues involved, we shall find ourselves lost before the truth becomes evident.

On this first celebration of Freedom Day, we look forward to a widening of the freedom which have already been won. We hope that the Asian Socialist Conference will go from strength to strength and widen its constituent membership, so as to draw closer the peoples of Asia and Africa and other lands where men are seeking or have lately won that freedom which is their inherent right.

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